

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-16

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 AID-20 OMB-01 SAI-01 SAM-01 MC-02

CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07

PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 DRC-01 /143 W

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R 311325Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3382

INFO AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEL AVIV 4348

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, IS, SY, UR

SUBJECT: DEFMIN PERES OF SOVIET MILITARY AID TO SYRIA

1. DEFMIN PERES, REPLYING TO KNESSET QUESTIONS JULY 30, SAID THAT TEAM OF SOVIET INSTRUCTORS AND ADVISERS IN SYRIA HAS RECENTLY BEEN INCREASED AT AN ACCELERATED PACE, BUT THERE IS NO PROOF THAT SUCH TEAMS ALSO OPERATE SOPHISTICATED WEAPONS IN THE BATTLEFIELD.

2. PERES FURTHER SAID THAT SOVIET UNION IS SUPPLYING TERRORIST ORGANIZATIONS WITH ARMS AND EQUIPMENT BY MEANS OF SHIPS CALLING AT ALGERIA, IRAQ AND SYRIA. IN ADDITION TO DIRECT ARMS SUPPLIES FROM RUSSIA, TERRORITST ARE RECEIVING AID IN FORM OF WEAPONS AND EQUIPMENT FROM OTHER COMMUNIST COUNTRIES, AND IT CAN BE ASSUMED THAT THESE TRANSACTIONS ARE EFFECTED WITH THE KNOWLEDGE, ENCOURAGEMENT AND PERHAPS EVEN MEDIATION OF THE SOVIET UNION.

3. PERES FUTHER STATED THAT SOVIET WEAPONS WERE REACHING TERRORISTS FROM ARAB STATES SUCH AS SYRIA, LIBYA AND IRAQ AND THESE ARMS SHIPMENTS, TOO, WERE WITHOUT DOUBT BEING SENT WITH THE FULL KNOWLEDGE AND CONSENT OF THE USSR.

4. COMMENT: JUSTICE MINISTER ZADOK TOLD US JULY 29 THAT CABINET
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HAD RECEIVED IN-DEPTH MILITARY INTELLIGENCE BRIEFING IN MID-JULY,

ACCORDING TO WHICH SOVIET ARMS SUPPLIES TO SYRIA HAD BEEN SIGNIFICANTLY ACCELERATED IN LAST FEW MONTHS. HE ALSO SUGGESTED GOI HAD "OTHER" INTELLIGENCE RE SYRIA WHICH, COMBINED WITH OTHER FACTORS IN SITUATION, LED ISRAELIS TO CONCLUSION SYRIANS MIGHT TRY WAR OPTION LATER THIS YEAR. HE MIGHT HAVE BEEN REFERRING TO INCREASE IN SOVIET MILITARY PERSONNEL AS CLAIMED BY PERES.

5. WE WOULD APPRECIATE DEPT VIEWS AS TO ACCURACY OF PERES CLAIMS AND, IF TRUE, IMPLICATIONS OF INCREASED SOVIET PRESENCE RE PROSPECTS FOR CONTINUED CEASEFIRE ON SYRIAN BORDER.
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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, PARAMILITARY FORCES, MILITARY ASSISTANCE, ARMS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 31 JUL 1974
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: boyleja
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1974TELAV04348
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D740208-0559
From: TEL AVIV
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1974/newtext/t1974071/aaaaaahr.tel
Line Count: 72
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: boyleja
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 10 JUN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <10 JUN 2002 by boyleja>; APPROVED <25 FEB 2003 by boyleja>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DEFMIN PERES OF SOVIET MILITARY AID TO SYRIA
TAGS: PFOR, IS, SY, UR, PLO, (PERES, SHIMON)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005